

Four-Year Plan

(*Vierjahresplan*), economic program written by Adolf Hitler in August 1936 for the revitalization of the German army and economy within four years in anticipation of war. This was the first time Hitler intervened in German economic policy.

Hitler intended to quickly rearm and create an independent economy strong enough to endure enemy blockades and war conditions. He aspired to create a self-sufficient Germany not dependent on raw materials from the outside world. Thus, he established the Goering Reich Works, aluminum factories, oil refineries, and sought to develop a synthetic-materials industry to eliminate the need for some raw materials. Hermann Goering was put in charge of the Four-Year Plan; he was awarded exceptional powers in the economic domain despite his ignorance of economics. During the war Goering robbed German-occupied countries of their raw materials in order to further Germany's economic goals. He also had millions of people deported for forced labor.

Hitler kept the plan secret for fear of opposition from economic circles. In making Germany more self-sufficient, Hitler provided the foundation for speeding up his anti-Jewish policies. In an attempt to bolster the economy, he even tried to pass a law making the Jews responsible for the sorry state of the German economy after World War I.